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Security Council

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Tuesday, 24 February 2015, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Liu Jieyi	(China)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Chad	Mrs. Alingue
	Chile	Mr. Olguín Cigarroa
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mr. Jusys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant/Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): I am honoured to have the opportunity to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In doing so, I shall present to the Council the main points of Serbia's OSCE chairmanship agenda. I shall also brief members on a number of other issues of critical importance to peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions.

Serbia's chairmanship of the OSCE comes during the worst European security crisis since the end of the Cold War. Mistrust and divisions, confrontational policies and zero-sum logic are undermining the cooperative approach to security that is at the heart of the OSCE's comprehensive body of commitments and principles.

The OSCE of 2015 is very different from the OSCE of just two years ago. The crisis in and around Ukraine continues to dominate security considerations in Europe as it did in 2014, but its impact is far greater. Today, the OSCE faces sharpening institutional divisions, competition and confrontation in a context of mutually exclusive perceptions, yet the current crisis has highlighted the enduring strengths and advantages of the OSCE as the organization best suited to bridge growing divides and facilitate cooperative solutions.

The OSCE response to the current crisis has once again demonstrated its relevance to European security. The Organization has proved itself capable of substantive engagement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. The deployment of two OSCE field missions — the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk — is the most visible example of the OSCE's ability to launch collective actions even during a highly divisive crisis.

The OSCE has been continuously engaged in seeking a diplomatic solution to the current crisis. Serbia is now doing its utmost to pursue those efforts in an impartial and transparent manner. Our highest priority is to protect the inclusive and cooperative nature of the OSCE's work and to prevent the crisis from escalating into a larger confrontation. Serbia recognizes that both the OSCE and European security are at a critical juncture, and is fully committed to working with the main stakeholders to restore peace and stability in Ukraine. We are making every effort to rebuild confidence and trust among participating States and to restart our work together towards the vision of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security community.

I would like to personally acknowledge the unstinting efforts of the 2014 Swiss OSCE chairmanship, and of my colleague, Swiss Minister Didier Burkhalter, to facilitate a political process aimed at de-escalating the crisis. I would also like to thank Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, my Special Representative to Ukraine and to the Trilateral Contact Group, for her tireless commitment to helping the parties find the path towards peace. I also commend the dedicated work of the Special Monitoring Mission.

Since assuming the chairmanship of the organization at the beginning of the year, my agenda has been dominated by the ongoing political crisis and escalating violence in Ukraine. An increasing number of people in eastern Ukraine have been impacted by recurring violence. Waves of civilians have been dislodged from their homes in a desperate search for safer ground, accounting for a combined figure of over 1 million displaced, over 5,000 killed, and more than 12,000 wounded. It is therefore high time for peace to take hold. The package of measures announced in Minsk on 12 February is the best available road map to restore calm to the east of the country. We hope that the political will displayed by the signatories to the package of measures in Minsk will prevail in order to

ensure that the guns are silenced and human suffering is eased.

Ukraine is at a critical juncture; what is needed is full adherence to the ceasefire to allow for the implementation of the other elements of the package, notably the withdrawal of heavy weapons and equipment. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is ready and willing to play its role to facilitate, monitor and supervise those crucial activities, in close coordination with the Trilateral Contact Group. While the current focus understandably remains on implementing the military aspects of the second Minsk agreement, we should not lose sight of the non-military elements of the arrangement, such as the sorely needed restoration of socioeconomic ties, local elections and constitutional reform.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, I wish to emphasize the importance of coordination and cooperation between the OSCE and the relevant United Nations agencies. While the Monitoring Mission is not a humanitarian presence, it is well placed — given its large number of monitors in the conflict zone — to assist in the identification of urgent humanitarian needs. I welcome the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations on the ground on humanitarian issues and the protection of human rights.

Concerning border-related issues, I would like to highlight the ongoing importance of the OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk. Despite the limited scope of its operations, it remains the only international presence on the international Ukrainian-Russian border. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission will continue to conduct patrols to locations on the Ukrainian side of the border, but increased border monitoring activities will be dependent upon the security situation on the ground. I sincerely hope that in the weeks and months to come we can further build on the measures recently agreed upon in Minsk, with a view to returning peace to eastern Ukraine. Serbia's chairmanship will continue to do its utmost to help reach that goal.

We must not overlook the detrimental impact of the crisis in and around Ukraine on the broader OSCE agenda, in particular on the protracted conflicts in Moldova and the Southern Caucasus. In particular, as we prepare to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act this year, we need to find ways to rebuild trust and confidence and to re-engage in joint efforts to strengthen security across the whole OSCE region. We must keep a close eye on the broader strategic perspective of European security, and we must continue to uphold our common values and principles as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and other landmark OSCE documents. I strongly believe that the OSCE has a crucial role to play in the overall European security architecture as an inclusive platform for dialogue, building trust and bridging the growing East-West divide. That is captured in the motto of Serbia's chairmanship — "Rebuilding trust and confidence in order to create a positive agenda for the future" — and we shall spare no effort in pursuing that goal.

In this regard, I welcome the creation of the Panel of Eminent Persons on European Security as a Common Project, which was launched in December at the annual OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel. I am confident that the Panel has the potential to generate innovative ideas that can help us recapture the spirit of Helsinki and I look forward to its recommendations on how to replace the current culture of confrontation with one of cooperation and joint action.

Addressing the protracted conflicts is high on Serbia's OSCE agenda. All parties should step up their efforts within the agreed formats to move away from the current status quo and show more political will to make progress towards a peaceful settlement. We believe that small but concrete steps will help improve trust and confidence among the parties and can pave the way to address problems effectively.

I am particularly concerned over recent developments related to Nagorno Karabakh. Last year's three meetings between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan were an encouraging indication of a renewed appetite for dialogue. However, since then we have observed a sharp deterioration of the situation on the ground and the political process has slowed. Serbia's OSCE chairmanship continues to support the efforts of the Minsk Group co-chairs to facilitate high-level meetings and to explore, together with the parties, all avenues that may lead to a long overdue settlement. In Munich earlier this month, I met with the co-chairs and my personal representative to discuss further steps to decrease tensions in the region. On that occasion, I discussed the situation also with the Foreign Ministers for Armenia and Azerbaijan. I shall continue my engagement with the leaders in the region when I visit them in a few months.

Serbia's chairmanship continues to support the OSCE's close cooperation with the United Nations

and the European Union in co-chairing the Geneva international discussions. Our co-facilitation with the European Union of a Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism helps us ensure the safety and security of people living close to South Ossetia's Administrative Boundary Line. The OSCE continues to support the swift resumption of the meetings of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism. We are keeping the possibility of some form of OSCE presence in Georgia on the agenda to enhance our support for both the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism and the Geneva discussions.

It is unfortunate that the "5+2" process for the settlement of the Transdniestrian conflict has stalled in recent months. I intend to try to re-energize the process. My Special Representative recently visited Chisinau and Tiraspol precisely for that purpose. The establishment of the new Government in Moldova will hopefully also contribute in this regard. Restoring the regular rhythm of official 5+2 meetings during the course of the year is the first step. What is needed now is the political will to move forward and to make tangible progress. This would benefit the populations on both sides of the Dniestr/Nistru River.

Some years ago, the Western Balkans was riddled with conflicts similar in nature. Nowadays, however, cooperation and the solution of problems by peaceful means prevail. We have decided to include in our chairmanship, as a matter of priority, the promotion of cooperation in the Western Balkans, which is telling proof that, irrespective of height and entrenchment, the obstacles on the road to peace can be overcome with political reason and good will.

The OSCE's activities in Ukraine and in areas affected by protracted conflicts underline the fundamental role of regional organizations in maintaining peace and security in their respective regions, as envisioned in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Serbia's chairmanship will continue to pursue the efforts initiated under the Swiss chairmanship to further operationalize the role of the OSCE as a Chapter VIII regional arrangement. The OSCE stands ready to make its experience available to the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. As we speak, the members of the Panel are visiting Vienna. They will meet with relevant OSCE interlocutors, including representatives of the participating States.

The OSCE's anti-terrorism activities provide another example of the substantial contribution that regional organizations acting under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations can make in support of United Nations-led efforts to fight terrorism. Recent events have underscored the need for the international community to remain vigilant and join forces in tackling this deeply troubling phenomenon. I am pleased to highlight the OSCE's close collaboration with virtually all United Nations entities taking part in the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. The benefits of this kind of collaboration have been plentiful. We are determined to make the most of all opportunities for collaboration in the future.

As we know, the OSCE and the United Nations share common interests in many parts of the OSCE area. Increased cooperation will enable us to maximize synergies globally, regionally and locally. At the same time, we will use existing resources more effectively and leverage capacities on the ground, like the OSCE field operations. At the 2014 Ministerial Council in Basel, OSCE participating States committed themselves to countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as kidnapping and hostage-taking for ransom by terrorist groups. Both ministerial declarations support relevant Security Council resolutions.

Thanks to its comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE not only plays an important role in countering terrorism, but also helps prevent divisions within societies and to foster tolerance and non-discrimination. Our chairmanship will devote special attention to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and also to violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, particularly the radicalization of youth. We will convene an OSCE-wide counter-terrorism expert conference on this issue in Vienna on 30 June and 1 July. The OSCE is well placed to work, through its participating States and field operations, on promoting community-based approaches to countering violent extremism, including through the involvement of youth, women and civil society. We are also in dialogue on this issue with our Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Cooperation.

The partnership between the United Nations and the OSCE is critical for addressing security challenges in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space. The OSCE engages in political dialogue, coordination and information exchange with the United Nations on thematic and regional issues both at the political and expert level. All OSCE structures work with a wide range of United Nations entities to enhance security in

all three dimensions across the OSCE area and in the adjacent regions. We highly value this close cooperation. We are eager to make it more operational and results-oriented through revamped staff talks, targeted staff exchanges and the pragmatic implementation of the existing institutional framework.

The OSCE is also committed to creating new synergies with the United Nations in key regions of common interest, including Eastern Europe, South-East Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Afghanistan, as well as the southern Mediterranean. Both OSCE and United Nations field operations are precious assets, and their potential for cooperation should be exploited to the maximum. The OSCE is eager to intensify its partnership with the United Nations. I hope that we can turn creative ideas for cooperation into successful initiatives.

I thank Council members for their attention and I am ready to answer any questions they may pose.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Dačić for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome to the Security Council the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and we thank him for his comprehensive briefing.

The Russian Federation has consistently championed the improvement and development of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional mechanisms on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, first and foremost, its Chapter VIII. It is on this basis that cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE should be grounded. Cooperation between the two Organizations is consistent and multilateral in nature. It encompasses all dimensions of security, including cross-dimensional issues. The OSCE should complement the United Nations in dealing with global issues and assist in the implementation in the areas of its regional responsibility within the framework of its mandate of mechanisms that have been agreed at a global level.

Russia stands ready for constructive cooperation with the Serbian chairmanship-in-office of the OSCE. We back the policy course adopted by it aimed at restoring trust and the development of a positive, forward-looking agenda. We are convinced that it is going to lead in an impartial way, mindful of the interests of all participating States, and it can expect our support in this endeavour. In our view, there is a need to focus the work of the Organization this year on continuing — within the framework of the Helsinki+40 process, which we backed from the very outset — the political dialogue aimed at finding a path to extricate European security from its crisis, assist in settling the conflict in Ukraine through participation of the OSCE in the Trilateral Contract Group and support the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. There is also a need to appropriately mark at the OSCE the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

On the agenda, we also have the very timely topic of countering terrorism and drug trafficking. In this context, we deem it important to organize an OSCE conference on the threat of foreign terrorist fighters as a way to counter the spread of terrorist and extremist ideology, prevent the radicalization of the social and political mood, and combat drug threats stemming from Afghanistan.

The current situation speaks to the need for organizing an event on protecting Christians. In this vein, two meetings on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism were organized in 2014. It would be useful to hold a seminar on a comparative analysis of the methodologies of the Organization and monitoring of elections at the OSCE, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, including an assessment of the conduct of electoral campaigns and an extension of the comprehensive analysis of electoral legislation at the OSCE that was carried out by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in 2013, upon the initiative of Russia and Belarus.

The Ukrainian conflict has shown that the OSCE remains needed in the pan-European area. To fully realize its potential, the Organization must move towards a rejection of confrontation and a return of the discussion to a constructive mode. It is only thus that we will be able to resolve the accumulated systemic problems.

The fortieth anniversary of the OSCE this year is a good opportunity to tackle the issue of updating the European security system. There is a need to reaffirm

the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the provisions of the Charter for European Security, in order to take steps towards the implementation of the principle of the indivisibility of security and implement States' commitments not to strengthen their security at the expense of the security of others. We expect to see the OSCE return to discussing the issue of forging a single politico-military-humanitarian-economic space stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, including the issue of incorporating integration processes — the so-called integrating of integration.

Separately, I would like to touch upon the importance of relaunching a substantive discussion on the reform of the OSCE. Russia backed the idea of the creation of a panel of eminent or wise persons at the OSCE on issues of European security and sent one of our leading political experts to participate in it. We expect that the intellectual contribution of the group will serve to lend impetus to a resumption at the OSCE of broad discussion on key issues of security.

On the whole, we welcome the efforts of the OSCE on assisting and settling the conflict in Ukraine. In the Contact Group, with the participation of the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine, Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, we were able to achieve positive results. We are satisfied with the adoption on 12 February of a package of measures on the implementation of the Minsk agreements and of resolution 2022 (2015), which backed it up. Now it is important to achieve the implementation of the package measures by all the parties of the conflict. In the OSCE, work has already started on determining modalities and concrete steps on assisting implementation.

We welcome the active role played by the Special Monitoring Mission, whose priority areas of work we see to be monitoring the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weaponry, assisting in dialogue and investigating violations of humanitarian law and human rights law. We are carefully following the Mission's reports, which should be free of censorship. What is unacceptable are cases of pressure being exerted on the monitors. The security provided for them must be unswerving. The Special Monitoring Mission plays a key role in monitoring compliance with the Minsk agreements of 12 February. The impartial verification activity of the Special Monitoring Mission must be equally spread over the whole region comprising the area of the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weaponry under the 12 February agreement. We expect the Mission to continue to fully inform us in its reports of the situation throughout the entire territory. In that regard, the Mission will play an important role in closely coordinating all responsible individuals and structures from Kyiv, Donetsk and Lugansk.

Nevertheless, there should be no reduction in the attention paid by the Special Monitoring Mission to other regions of Ukraine in addition to the south-east. We back the Special Monitoring Mission with financial and human resources and we are in favour of expanding its capacities. We continue to search for specialists for work in the Special Monitoring Mission based on its growing needs.

On the whole, we are satisfied with the work of the OSCE's monitors at the Russian-Ukrainian border crossing points in Donetsk and Gukovo. They are noting the real situation of refugees, and despite fanciful claims are confirming the absence of the deployment of any Russian military forces. We see no need for proposals to expand their mandate to the whole of the Donetsk-Lugansk section of the Ukrainian-Russian border, since they are not in keeping with the Berlin Declaration of 2 July 2014, which was reached by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of France, Germany and Ukraine, for whose implementation the OSCE monitors were deployed. On this issue, there is a need to reach agreement with the separatists as one of the parties to the conflict.

We note the readiness of the OSCE ODIHR to monitor the elections in the Donbas as soon as all aspects related to their organization and implementation in accordance with the package of measures dated 12 February are settled and agreed. The elections will substantially determine the whole political process of a settlement. There will be a need to take into account the fact that a large number of individuals were forced to leave the conflict zone and now find themselves both in other regions of Ukraine and abroad.

Mr. González de Linares Palou (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I very much appreciate the briefing from the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić.

Spain recognizes the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and the regional security organizations and believes that, under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, this cooperation is

called upon to contribute in a marked manner to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that context, we think that there is broad manoeuvring room for cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the fostering of collective security in the OSCE region and, in particular, currently, in contributing to a solution to the conflict in Ukraine, facilitating humanitarian assistance for the population.

Spain's commitment to the OSCE goes back to the origin of the organization. We participated in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and signed the Helsinki Final Act, the fortieth anniversary of which we are commemorating this year. More recently, as members of the Council know, we presided over the Organization in 2007. I assure Mr. Dačić that he can count on the support of Spain in addressing his priorities, many of which are also our priorities within the OSCE over which he presides.

First of all, we support the efforts that the OSCE and its Chairperson-in-Office are undertaking in order to contribute to a resolution of the crisis in Ukraine. Spain is aware of the tremendous amount of work that the Chairperson-in-Office is facing right now as a result of the clear role he is entrusted with in the current security crisis, which, I believe, is the most significant in the OSCE area since the end of the Cold War. Spain is convinced that the Minsk agreement of 12 February, which the Security Council endorsed and which includes an important role for the OSCE — is an opportunity to move ahead on the road towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict with respect for the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. I should like to thank France and Germany again for their initiative, which we firmly support.

We also support the worthwhile work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, to which Spain will continue to contribute human and financial resources. We believe that the Mission must have the resources it needs at all times. We also very much appreciate the excellent work of Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office to the Trilateral Contact Group. Moreover, we welcome the importance that the Chairperson-in-Office will give to continuing the efforts to resolve prolonged conflicts in the framework of the formats agreed upon in each case. We think that his vision of favouring small steps that build trust between the parties is an essential first phase before addressing the substantive issues.

The fight against terrorism — identified by the Chairperson-in-Office as one of his priorities — is another area in which the OSCE can count on our active cooperation. We are aware of the growing importance of the transnational threats, such as cyber threats and organized crime, with its ramifications in drug trafficking, security and the control of borders. We would say the same regarding the risk regarding of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In all of those areas the Chairperson-in-Office will have the support and know-how of my country.

When it comes to strategies to combat terrorism, it is essential that we pay particular attention to the causes and the prevention of violent radicalism. Spain, along with Turkey, was a driver behind the Alliance of Civilizations, a crucial tool in promoting dialogue while fighting against intolerance and radicalization. The OSCE is participating actively in the Alliance's Group of Friends. We must extend political support to the Alliance, but also provide it with the means that allow it to work effectively.

Spain also has a long tradition in the area of mediation and the promotion of dialogue. We welcome the association framework on mediation between the OSCE and the United Nations. We wish to make available to the Chairperson-in-Office our experience and recent initiatives in that area, in particular with regard to our mediation initiative in the Mediterranean, which we launched together with Morocco.

On the political-military dimension, Spain believes that measures to boost both confidence and security are an essential element when it comes to military security within the OSCE space. The conflict in Ukraine has clearly underscored that military transparency between and among participating States in the control of weapons is a matter of particular importance in the framework of European security.

I should like to conclude by underscoring that the magnitude of the crisis in Ukraine should not let us forget that many of the threats to security in the OSCE area come from the Mediterranean. Spain is committed to fostering fruitful relations and dialogue with its Mediterranean cooperation partners. This region offers a great deal of opportunities, but also a great deal of challenges.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): I wish to welcome Minister Dačić to the Security Council in his capacity as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, as well as to thank him for his briefing.

Forty years ago, the Helsinki Final Act spelled out fundamental principles governing relations from Vancouver to Vladivostok: the non-use of force, non-infringement upon each other's sovereignty and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. As we commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations and the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, we must recommit ourselves to the constitutional foundations of the United Nations and the OSCE.

The very foundation of this Organization has been seriously damaged, as the Charter of the United Nations and Helsinki Final Act have been violated by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and its occupation of Crimea. The ink of resolution 2202 (2015) was still fresh when Russia-backed and -commanded militants shelled Debaltseve, Gorlivka and Pervomaysk. The resolution obliges all parties, including Russia, to implement their commitments under the Minsk agreement.

The OSCE plays key role. It has the mandate to facilitate the implementation of all the Minsk agreements. The challenge is the denial of access. The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission must be allowed to carry out its monitoring and verification functions. The denial of access by pro-Russian militants is a violation of resolution 2202 (2015).

Effective monitoring of the Russian-Ukrainian border will be another crucial step, but Russia has so far denied denied that in order to sustain the war in eastern Ukraine. In that connection, I wonder, whether the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office elaborate upon the possibility of United Nations cooperation with OSCE to ensure full control over and monitoring of the Russia-Ukraine border, of which OSCE currently monitor 80 metres.

The protracted conflicts in Europe have been simmering for too long. The violent trend in Nagorno Karabakh is worrisome. There is a clear need for the highest political involvement in order not to let the situation spiral out of the control. Russia is using all means to hinder Moldova's European integration process. The 5+2 talks have been taken hostage by the separatist region of Transnistria and their political masters by way of conditioning the 5+2 agreements.

The so-called agreements between Russia and the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali are a barely masked annexation and a breach of the principles of international law and Russia's commitments made by President Medvedev in 2008. In that connection, we wonder if the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office intends to react to the latest annexation of Georgian territory — when Russia and Tskhinvali signed the so-called integration agreement?

Fanning protracted conflicts in that corner of the world should also be seen in the context of the dismantlement of the European system of conventional arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. Lithuania calls for full implementation and modernization of existing commitments, in particular the Vienna Document. The OSCE has already made some tangible progress in its efforts to complement international processes towards enhancing transparency in cyber space. It has developed confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technology. The OSCE is also contributing to debates by sharing best practices and lessons learned.

We commend the focus of the Chairperson-in-Office on implementing the Basel Declaration on countering foreign terrorist fighters, and on kidnapping and hostage-taking for ransom. Good coordination among the the United Nations, the OSCE, NATO and the European Union is essential. We support it.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of t resolution 1325 (2000), on women's role in peace and security. In order ensure that experiences from the OSCE region are included in the United Nations-commissioned study, in April Lithuania will hold a regional meeting on women and peace and security in Vilnius.

Fundamental freedoms and human rights are under threat in parts of the OSCE area. OSCE institutions, along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, should take a proactive stance in addressing the human rights abuses in illegally annexed Crimea, as well as in the areas controlled by the armed groups in eastern Ukraine. The United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe have to be granted secure, safe and unrestricted access to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.

The propaganda waged by State-owned media inciting hatred and aggressive nationalism highlights

the need to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and to place fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of expression and the freedom of media, very high on the OSCE agenda.

We look forward to continued cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in seeking a durable solution to European security.

Mr. Olguín Cigarroa (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting to address the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and regional bodies and arrangements. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for his briefing.

In commemorating 40 years of the Helsinki Final Act, it is appropriate to reflect on the OSCE's contribution in ensuring international peace and security. For Chile, collective action is essential in tackling both traditional and emerging threats to peace and security, and it should be strengthened through cooperation among regional bodies and arrangements. That is the sense in which my country understands Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Yesterday the Council reflected on history and reaffirmed the commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (see S/PV.7389). My delegation emphasized the full force of those irrevocable principles in guiding relations among States. Those values and norms also guide the OSCE in its work to resolve situations currently posing a serious threat to regional stability and global security, including protracted conflicts. We underscore that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States must be respected.

In reflecting on the work of the OSCE, Chile emphasizes the promotion of inclusive development for the rehabilitation of fractured societies — an idea that is also related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding and corresponds to a development model advocating political stability, democratic governance and social cohesion. In that context, we reiterate that mainstreaming of the gender perspective is critical.

The OCSE has contributed to conflict resolution and stability in Europe and is working to build trust and confidence in the framework of a positive agenda for the future. We believe that the organization has assisted its member States in times of difficulty, including situations that affected regional stability, security and global peace. In that context, we underscore the support of the OSCE to democracy, the rule of law and human rights through its mechanisms and operations on the ground, on behalf of issues on the Council's agenda as well as issues that are not.

Minister Dačić's briefing made clear that the main challenge of the organization will be in maintaining the legacy of dialogue and compromise, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the promotion of confidence-building measures and the implementation of the concepts of solidarity, responsibility and cooperation, which have characterized the organization. The OSCE remains an essential forum for dialogue and a stabilizing mechanism — even more so in view of the challenges facing the region today.

In conclusion, Chile shares the principles, values and goals that the OSCE follows and promotes, because we consider it essential that regional mechanisms and bodies strengthen effective universal action by ensuring conditions conducive to durable peace and security and understanding among communities and peoples.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): We commend Minister Ivica Dačić, in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office, for his efforts to strengthen the range of activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in promoting regional stability and security. We acknowledge that it is a challenging role.

As a regional organization, the OSCE has important functions across the full spectrum of the Security Council's mandate — from early warning to conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution and tackling root causes. We strongly support cooperation between the Security Council and the OSCE, not only in immediate crises but in the full range of peace and security issues dealt with by the OSCE.

In particular, we commend and support strongly the OSCE's engagement in the situation in Ukraine and its efforts towards finding a peaceful solution. We members of the Council must continue to play our role and our part, including by continuing to apply pressure on the parties to adhere to the commitments made in Minsk, most immediately to observe the ceasefire and withdraw heavy weaponry.

By unanimously adopting resolution 2202 (2015), the Security Council sent a strong message that it stands behind the OSCE as it carries out its activities in Ukraine, particularly the monitoring and verification

of the ceasefire. It is unacceptable that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has not been guaranteed safe, secure passage to certain areas by the separatists, including Debaltseve. Without safety guarantees, it cannot do its job.

We call for all parties to the conflict to ensure safe and unfettered access by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, as provided for under the package of measures for the implementation of the Minks agreements. Those provisions must be respected. We reiterate our call on Russia to use its influence with the separatist groups to comply with what has been agreed.

Furthermore, in the absence of mandated reporting from the ground by the Secretary-General, the Special Monitoring Mission is best placed to provide accurate reporting on the implementation of the ceasefire and is an important source of information to enable the Council to remain properly seized of the situation.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the presence of Mr. Ivica Dačić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and thank him for his briefing. I congratulate his country on his accession to the chairmanship-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2015.

Exactly one year ago, we addressed the situation in Ukraine for the first time in the Security Council (see S/PV.7117). The crisis that had begun there required the OSCE to play its full role, as it was in a unique position to overcome the concerns of all involved. In the circumstances, the OSCE was able to assume its full responsibility by deploying the Special Monitoring Mission and becoming a party to the Minsk agreements, which were signed by OSCE Special Representative Heidi Tagliavini.

Faced with a security and humanitarian situation that remains alarming, we have a collective responsibility to spare no effort in silencing the weapons and achieving an agreement. That was the objective of the approach chosen by the German Chancellor and the President of the French Republic a few weeks ago. Last week, in adopting resolution 2202 (2015), the Council endorsed the Minsk agreements, putting its full weight and authority behind the commitments undertaken by the parties. The OSCE must continue to play its full role by ensuring the good faith implementation of all of the Minks agreements, which now from part of a Council resolution.

Yesterday the OSCE received the document that was agreed to by both the Ukrainians and the separatists, which disclosed the details with regard to the withdrawal of heavy weapons. The agreement is a first positive step in terms of implementing that element of the Minks agreements. It must be immediately implemented with the full involvement of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which will have to control, verify and monitor the withdrawal of heavy weapons. Its role cannot be limited to joint patrols along the line of contact, as requested by the ceasefire control commission, according to information transmitted by the parties.

This morning in Paris, at a Normandy format meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France, the four Ministers asked that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission be strengthened and its mandate extended with additional personnel, equipment and financing. It is quite normal that the OSCE should be able in this task to count on United Nations support. After all, the United Nations possesses the necessary expertise and recognized capacities. Channels already exist for both organizations to offer each other mutual support. We stand ready to assist both organizations in exploring ways to improve that cooperation. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides an ideal format for that dialogue, which the Council has successfully used in other circumstances.

Above and beyond Ukraine, cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations covers a broad field of action and various situations — from Central Asia to Bosnia to Georgia and Kosovo — in which the OSCE and the United Nations have demonstrated their ability to work together harmoniously. That complementarity is primarily based on the multidimensional concept of security held by the OSCE. Through its field missions, the OSCE is present in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and it often works alongside the United Nations in a number of areas.

In the Balkans, the OSCE, in full cooperation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, enabled voters in Kosovo to participate peacefully in the elections of June 2014. In addition, we support the priority Serbia has granted to water management, a central issue in an area affected by flooding. The OSCE will tackle that issue during a forum on economic and environmental issues.

In the Caucasus, the OSCE works to promote dialogue and confidence-building. France is especially committed as a co-Chair of the Minsk Group, alongside the United States and the Russian Federation, and stands ready to help Armenia and Azerbaijan to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. We take note of the commitment of the Serbian Chairperson-in-Office to contribute to the task by promoting dialogue between the parties.

Concerning Georgia, France has lent its support to the Geneva talks, in which a very important role is played by the OSCE, side by side with the European Union and the United Nations. We reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity of Georgia and reject the reconciliation agreements signed with the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We urge the parties not to undermine, by any further actions or words, the dialogue format that has been established. We also welcome the willingness of the Serbian chairmanship-in-office to relaunch a discussion on the OSCE presence on the ground, the institutional organization of which remains to be determined.

Beyond all those issues, we welcome Serbia's determination to fully exploit the capacities of OSCE field missions to ensure that assistance is tailored to the host country's needs and provided in a cost-effective and environmentally friendly manner.

Secondly, reflections on the political-military aspects within the OSCE framework contribute to an overall improvement in security, of which the Council remains the cornerstone. We welcome the commitment of the Serbian chairmanship-in-office following Switzerland's chairmanship, to modernize the 2011 Vienna Document on confidence-building measures and strengthening security. At the same time, we welcome its intention to update the OSCE code of conduct on political-military aspects, which are essential to ensure democratic control of armed and security forces.

We note with satisfaction the desire of the Serbian chairmanship to continue discussions on the issues of reform and governance of security systems, which are also being evaluated at the United Nations. Similarly, we impatiently await the events organized by the Serbian chairmanship on the fight against transnational threats, a topic on which the Council has also been seized.

The future of the OSCE and its dialogue with the United Nations will be marked this year by an important commemoration, the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Accords. France fully supports the dialogue initiated at the ministerial meeting in Dublin on the political future of the OSCE within the framework of the Helsinki+40 process. France subscribes to the analysis of the Serbian chairmanship on the need to strengthen efforts in the areas of of the rule of law, the freedom of expression, the freedom of the media and the protection of national minorities, all issues that the participating States of the OSCE have been working on for 40 years.

The OSCE covers a vast area from Vancouver to Vladivostok, an area of shared values, marked by the conviction that Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security are closely linked with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All those values are also at the very heart of the United Nations. I wish to reiterate to Serbia our wishes for success during its tenure and to ensure it of France's support.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank Deputy Prime Minister Dačić for his briefing as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office. As he has stated, his chairmanship comes during the worst crisis of European security since the end of the Cold War. I should therefore like to focus my remarks on Ukraine and the OSCE role in that crisis.

Over the past months, the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission o Ukraine, led by Ambassador Apakan, has been invaluable in giving some visibility to the challenges to peace and security that persist in eastern Ukraine. I pay tribute to the work of the OSCE and express our full support for the Mission and for Heidi Tagliavini, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Ukraine. We believe that its role should be greatly strengthened.

Last week, the Council adopted resolution 2202 (2015), which endorses a package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreement and underlines the importance of achieving a comprehensive ceasefire in eastern Ukraine. However, in the days since the agreement was signed in Minsk on 12 February, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission has observed continuous breaches of the ceasefire that threaten to further destabilize eastern Ukraine and undermine the Minsk agreements in their entirety.

Minsk called for a ceasefire to begin on 15 February, and for the withdrawal of heavy weaponry to start on 16 February. Yet within 40 minutes of coming into effect, the ceasefire was shattered by a

Russian-backed separatist offensive on Debaltseve. On 19 February, Ukrainian forces withdrew from the city. Scores of Ukrainian soldiers were left dead or injured. The continued presence of Russian military hardware, including Uragan rocket launchers and T-72 tanks around Debaltseve, shows that Russia's commitment to withdraw foreign military formations, which was a key element of the Minsk agreement, has been disregarded. The OSCE reports that convoys are still crossing the international border and that shelling persists in Donetsk and Luhansk, in clear violation of the ceasefire.

There have been some bright spots. We welcome the exchange of a number of prisoners this weekend between the Ukrainian armed forces and Russian-backed separatists. However, many more remain in detention, including the Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. Clearly, that is not yet enough.

We welcome efforts by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to fulfil its mandate in difficult circumstances. We were gravely concerned by reports of aggressive separatist behaviour towards the Mission on 22 February, when a separatist commander at the Kyivski checkpoint in Donetsk city threatened to kill the monitors. On the same day, an unmanned aerial vehicle of the Mission attempting to monitor compliance with the Minsk package in the area surrounding the Donetsk airport was deliberately and consistently jammed. Obstruction and threats to the Mission are unacceptable. The Council fully supports the work of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, and we should all unequivocally condemn the acts of separatists attempting to impede their work.

The Council has seen that pattern of behaviour before. We recall how the separatists cynically and systematically undermined the September Minsk agreement. We recall how the line of contact was ignored and redrawn as the separatists seized an additional 550 square kilometres of Ukrainian territory, and we recall how indiscriminate shelling of civilians brought the conflict to Mariupol and Volnovakha. As a signatory to the Minsk agreements, Russia needs to ensure that the separatist forces respect the ceasefire, and it must fulfil its own commitment to fully withdraw the heavy weapons it has supplied them with and its military formations from Ukrainian territory.

Russian influence can also help expedite the full exchange of prisoners and guarantee the humane treatment of any soldiers currently detained. It can also permit the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to continue its important work in monitoring the ceasefire and other provisions of the Minsk agreements. But so far we have seen few signs of Moscow's willingness to engage constructively. Russia has refused to allow the expansion of the OSCE border observation mission to enable full monitoring of the international border, leaving hundreds of kilometres of border open to the flow of weapons and soldiers. It continues to block the OSCE, including the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the High Commissioner on National Minorities, from any access to Crimea.

Nearly a year on from the illegal annexation of Crimea, we are faced with a crisis that has expanded far beyond the Black Sea and now threatens the security of the region and the credibility of the Security Council. The pattern is familiar from Russian behaviour in Georgia and Moldova — agreements are reached, ceasefires arranged, territorial gains consolidated. In Ukraine, these agreements are systematically breached within days. The violence resumes, and the push for more territory begins again. Quite apart from the terrible human costs, these actions also have profound consequences for international relations.

It is in no one's interests to return to an era where agreements between leaders become worthless. Organizations like the OSCE and the United Nations were founded on the principles of dialogue and respect for peace and stability. The Serbian chairmanship-in-office has made welcome efforts to bolster respect for OSCE principles despite continuing efforts by some States to undermine them. The Security Council must follow this example and ensure that further breaches of Minsk and further erosion of the principles that the Council shares are met with clear consequences. We will be working with our European Union partners to ensure that sanctions remain in place until Russia demonstrates a clear commitment to those fundamental principles.

Mrs. Alingue (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for his briefing and wish him every possible success in his new mission.

The end of the Cold War saw the emergence of a new global order where the maintenance of international peace and security has become more

complex. In a multipolar world, and despite a global vision and capacity, the United Nations increasingly requires cooperation with regional and subregional organizations to achieve the objectives of global peace and stability. To that end, the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter define the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, and especially with the OSCE, which plays such an essential role in maintaining peace and security in Europe.

In that respect, we congratulate the OSCE for its mediation, assessment and verification efforts undertaken to minimize the impacts of the crisis in Ukraine and throughout the region. That work is carried out in very difficult conditions, such as threats and kidnapping of the personnel of the organization. Faced with the resurgence of the fighting following the adoption, on 17 February, of resolution 2202 (2015), which supports the package of measures aimed at the implementation of the Minsk memorandum and protocol for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, Chad encourages the OSCE to step up its efforts to achieve a ceasefire and a complete cessation of hostilities as well as the implementation of the aforementioned agreements.

Chad is concerned by the very serious situation prevailing in eastern Ukraine, where the civilian population continues to find itself in the crossfire between the various combatants. We urge all parties to show restraint, and we reaffirm that the only solution of the crisis can be a political one with respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Still on the topic of Ukraine, we commend the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for its support when it comes to the crash of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, with the experts deployed at the crash site to be able to recover the bodies and investigate the causes of the accident despite the difficulties encountered in the conflict zone.

Beyond Ukraine, we welcome the role placed by the OSCE in terms of national dialogue, peacebuilding, the rule of law and restoring links of trust in the region. The conflicts and crises that occurred in Europe during the 1990s have deeply marked and divided the peoples and communities of the Balkans. Reforging links of trust is a fundamental prerequisite for peace and stability in the region. To that end, we encourage the OSCE to continue its work in northern Kosovo, on the situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan and on the resumption of negotiations within the framework of the 5+2 conflict settlement processes with respect to the Transnistria issue.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, we also congratulate the OSCE for the assistance provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia in May 2014 during the terrible flooding, which left hundreds of thousands of individuals without shelter or jobs. Despite the effectiveness of the work carried out by the OSCE, that work often faces complex and varied threats. Chad welcomes the fact that among the priorities of the Serbian chairmanship is the topic of terrorist attacks and threats, which have had a cruel impact on a number of countries in the region. Special attention should be devoted to the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and the resurgence of violent extremism and the radicalization of conflicts.

In Africa, the strategy in the Sahel region for the fight against terrorism is one that is aimed at a comprehensive approach, which includes economic, social and human aspects, especially targeting youth. In that regard, we welcome the desire shown and the efforts made by the OSCE to assist youth in terms of promoting their employment, their participation in political life and their inclusion in decision-making processes in order to counter the recruitment of young people by terrorist networks and organizations.

Attacks against the media remind us and continue to demonstrate the need to preserve and promote the freedom of expression and the protection of journalists, just like the promotion of the principles of gender equality, the rights of minorities, tolerance and non-discrimination. We welcome the taking into account of threats such as transnational organized crime, human trafficking and illegal migration, as well as the issues of combating corruption, water management and the prevention of natural disasters.Since the topics are cross-cutting and recurrent throughout a number of regions in the world, especially in Africa, we encourage the OSCE to expand its cooperation to other regional organizations, especially in sharing its experience with the African Union.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that all of the achievements and prospects I have mentioned mean that the OSCE is a key ally of the United Nations. The search for peace and stability requires knowledge of the situation on the ground and of the deep-rooted causes of conflicts. The expertise and the legitimacy

of the OSCE, in the year of the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, consolidates the foundation of this collective action in favour of peace and stability throughout the world.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, on his assumption of the position of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2015. We are indeed grateful for his briefing today on the priorities of the OSCE under his chairmanship. We commend his predecessor, Mr. Didier Burkhalter of Switzerland, who led the OSCE in 2014 with clear priorities for the advancement of the Organization.

The OSCE is a key component of Europe's security architecture. Its importance for building strong and generally cooperative relationships among its member States is evident from the briefing we have just heard. The OSCE is making noteworthy progress as an regional organization and is cooperating closely with the United Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Nigeria welcomes the high priority that the Chairperson-in-Office has placed on the agreements reached between the parties in pursuit of a peaceful settlement to the crisis in Ukraine. We believe that the implementation process of the current ceasefire under the Minsk Agreement can be strengthened with the support and expertise of the OSCE. We therefore encourage all parties to cooperate with the OSCE Monitoring Mission in Ukraine. Nigeria would like to see mediation, dialogue and cooperation accorded priority in the search for an enduring solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

Nigeria commends the OSCE for its efforts in assisting Azerbaijan and Armenia to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno Karabakh and South Ossetia conflicts. We also applaud the Organization's support to European Union-led dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. We urge the OSCE to intensify efforts within its capacities to assist the United Nations in putting an end to armed conflicts in the region.

Nigeria supports the OSCE's work in preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism and radicalization. The changing nature of terrorism and that fact that it is more diffuse, with groups intend of taking advantage of social, economic and governance vulnerabilities have propelled the Security Council and the United Nations to recognize that countering violent extremism is essential for preventing the spread of terrorism. The OSCE's community-policing approach is vital to this end. We take positive note on the outcome of the two-day workshop sponsored by the OSCE and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, held in Vienna in October 2014, which focused on the promotion of a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach to fighting terrorism. Nigeria strongly supports any strategy that empowers women to contribute to efforts that counter violent extremism and radicalization. We are firmly committed to the protection of human rights and civil liberties while fighting terrorism.

Finally, Nigeria commends the OSCE for its multidimensional approach to security, which underpins its adaptability and has allowed it to make significant contributions to peace, security and progress in Europe.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and I congratulate him on assuming his role as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for this year. We are confident that Serbia's effective and strong relations, especially with States concerned by conflicts within the purview of the OSCE, will enable him through his chairmanship to develop communications among the parties and to create condition conducive to resolving those conflicts in a comprehensive and cooperative manner.

The OSCE, which enjoys a unique membership, is able to play a vital and fundamental role, especially concerning conflicts in the context of European and Central Asian States. Through its efforts aimed at resolving conflicts, be they intra-State or regional in nature, the OSCE has since its establishment sought to find solutions and to remedy a number of conflicts which, without the joint efforts of that Organization and other members of the international community, would have intensified and continued much longer.

Based on the purposes and objectives of the OSCE, Jordan supports all forms of cooperation between that organization and the United Nations in keeping with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations and in fulfilment of the Charter objectives, especially those aimed at making today's turbulent world more secure,

stable and peaceful and welcoming of all persons, without discrimination or exclusion.

Jordan also supports the role of the OSCE in maintaining diplomatic channels between parties to conflict as a forum enabling communication among the parties. In this context, we look forward to further progress in efforts to resolve the ongoing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia through the good offices of the OSCE, given its leading role in dealing with that conflict through the Minsk Group, by finding a peaceful solution for it that respects the unity and sovereignty of the internationally recognized Azerbaijani territories and ends the suffering of the refugees resulting from that conflict. It should be based on the various relevant resolutions issued by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the OSCE.

We also commend of the positive role of the OSCE in the Ukrainian crisis since it began, especially in facilitating communication and dialogue between the stakeholders and its efforts to provide tangible measures on the ground to de-escalate the situation and pave the way to a peaceful and sustainable resolution to that conflict.

Promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy in post-conflict countries is fundamental in building sustainable piece in those communities. We cannot therefore overlook the role of the OSCE in those fields in addition to numerous efforts and initiatives in dealing with conflicts and ending tensions, especially in the Southern Caucasus and Afghanistan, and as far afield as the Balkans, where we hope that, under the current chairmanship of the OSCE, there will be improved good-neighbourly relations.

As Council members know well, the topic of security, in the broadest sense, is at the top of the priorities and concerns of the OSCE, specifically when carrying out its periodic discussions. Among the most prominent common security threats facing all of us today are those resulting from terrorism and terrorist entities which threaten international peace and security. In this context, Jordan calls for intensified joint cooperation with relevant organizations, including the OSCE, in a unified international effort to combat terrorism through a comprehensive and effective approach to tackle this scourge and save our world from it.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that Jordan, as an active Member of the United Nations and a Mediterranean partner in the OSCE, will spare no effort in promoting cooperation between these two Organizations and supporting them in all fields, especially human rights, disarmament, the environment and dealing with the consequences of natural disasters.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): We welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, to this meeting of the Security Council and thank him for his briefing outlining the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) priorities under his chairmanship. We wish Serbia the greatest of success in discharging these responsibilities.

Cooperation with regional arrangements strengthens United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, prevent conflicts and restore stability in post-conflict situations. Chapter VI of the Charter of United Nations provides the appropriate framework for promoting greater participation of regional arrangements in matters related to international security international peace under Security Council authority.

Forty years after the conclusion of the Helsinki Final Act, an important agreement for stabilizing peaceful coexistence amid the Cold War, we praise the important role played by the OSCE in strengthening security and cooperation in early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation, proving that the organization continues to play a key role as a reliable partner of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions.

Angola also praises the important role played by the OSCE in post-conflict transition processes, including in supporting the promotion of dialogue among Kosovo communities, a wide range of reforms in the Western Balkan countries and the continued efforts of the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group in assisting Azerbaijan and Armenia in finding a peaceful solution for the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. We also acknowledge the positive role played by the OSCE in Ukraine, in particular the role played by the Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, and the Special Monitoring Mission with a view to reducing tensions and thus fostering peace, stability and security.

We support the call made by the trilateral contact group to all sides in the conflict in Ukraine to fully respect and ensure the safety and security of the personnel of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. It

is our expectation that the OSCE will be able to make a positive contribution to the implementation of the package of measures agreed in Minsk on 12 February and that the sustained ceasefire will allow for the further implementation of the package of measures and the establishment of peace in Ukraine.

We welcome the priorities outlined by Serbia for its OSCE chairmanship, and we note the particular importance attached to regional and interregional cooperation and a balanced approach to the three OSCE security dimensions, namely, the political and military, the economic and environmental and the human, with a view to addressing conflicts and the root causes of security-related problems.

Angola attaches great value to the mandate of the OSCE, and we would like to encourage the OSCE to strengthen cooperation with African regional and subregional organizations in the framework of shared responsibility in addressing counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, trafficking in weapons, foreign terrorist fighters, violent extremism and radicalization, in particular youth radicalization.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanks you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We would also like to thank the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for his briefing. We also welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. In his briefing, he reviewed the activities of the organization he chairs and indicated the priorities of his country's chairmanship. My country would also like to congratualte Serbia for having assumed the OSCE chairmanship. We are certain that they will be successful in their leadership with a view to resolving the conflicts in the region. They can count on my country's full support.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes in line with international law. Direct negotiation is the most appropriate means for achieving that goal. Likewise, on various occasions, we have underscored that mediation by regional organizations is one of the paths towards a negotiated resolution of conflicts, and we therefore support the efforts of the OSCE. Under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, we can promote effective measures to be taken on the ground through the contribution of regional and subregional organizations and the OSCE, given the three security areas it addresses, which are important tools in responding to international challenges and fostering stability and peace. That work will always be in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with regular dialogue under a system of coordination and complementary actions in order to avoid any redundancy of effort in the various areas.

We recognize that the OSCE has played an important role in the rapprochement of peoples through dialogue. This is reflected in the fact that, despite the diversity of its 57 members, they have been able to overcome differences by employing an inclusive model. Important consensus has been reached in different situations that have required such consensus.

We welcome the fact that during his chairmanship Serbia will continue to work towards a peaceful resolution of crises, confidence-building measures and measures to strengthen solidarity, accountability and cooperation. Those are essential elements in these times and in situations such as in the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where there are Security Council resolutions that must be implemented within the framework of a process of negotiations between the parties. We also recognize the crucial role of the OSCE in the Ukrainian conflict, in which important diplomatic initiatives have been taken. Regarding the situation in the Ukraine, we would like to reiterate our support for the Minsk agreements signed by the Heads of State of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany as the only means of reaching a political resolution to the conflict. We stress that the ceasefire must be respected, there must not be an escalation of the conflict and there must be a focus, beyond extraregional interests, on an agreement being reached and on the continuity of the diplomatic efforts for peace. We reject the discourse of war. We think that an opportunity should be given to options for the peaceful resolution of this crisis and a process that will allow for the humanitarian needs of civilians to be addressed, help to be provided to the victims of the crisis and its root causes to be addressed.

We must continue to work to prevent conflict to complement the principles of the OSCE through a multidimensional approach that deals with current challenges in the complex and multifaceted international system. With regard to relations between the OSCE and

the United Nations, our country supports the process launched within the organization to make missions more effective on the ground and bring them in line with the specific needs of each host country, always on the basis of the necessary close cooperation with the United Nations in general and the Security Council more specifically.

In addition, we are sure that the OSCE, under Serbian leadership, will be able to play a relevant role in the cooperation to fight against transnational threats, international terrorism, which we repudiate in all of its forms, organized crime, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and illegal migration, as well as in promoting tolerance and dialogue among cultures. It will also help to fight effectively against xenophobia and discrimination, thus ensuring respect for the rights of national, religious and linguistic minorities.

Finally, we hope that the channels of communication and coordination with the OSCE can be enhanced to the benefit of international peace and security.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Dačić, to the Security Council and thank him for his briefing on OSCE activities under Serbia's leadership. The partnership between the OSCE and the United Nations is critically important, and we welcome the opportunity to hear about OSCE priorities.

The OSCE has taken on a very difficult and important set of responsibilities in Ukraine, and we strongly endorse the Chairman-in-Office's continued focus on brokering peace in Ukraine and serving as an impartial observer to the September 2014 agreements and the February 2015 implementation package signed in Minsk.

Of course, OSCE engagement and focus cannot alone turn commitments on the many papers that have been signed in Minsk into tangible realities on the ground, though the OSCE can, uniquely, shed light on those who undermine the path to peace. So it should come as no surprise that in addition to repeated attacks on Ukrainian positions well past the agreed line of contact, repeated failure to withdraw foreign fighters and military equipment, and repeated failure to pull back heavy weaponry, Russian-backed separatists have also repeatedly frustrated the access of OSCE observers to the very places they have pledged to ensure such access. This must end.

It is imperative that OSCE observers be allowed to operate safely and be granted unfettered access to all areas in order to effectively monitor the terms of the ceasefire and the subsequent withdrawal of heavy weaponry, foreign troops and mercenaries, in accordance with the Minsk agreements and resolution 2202 (2014), which we just adopted last week.

Under the terms of the Minsk memorandum, OSCE observers are supposed to be allowed to monitor and verify the ceasefire, and monitor and verify security zones in the border regions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Under the terms of the Minsk protocol, OSCE observers are supposed to be allowed to monitor the ceasefire, monitor the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and monitor the withdrawal of all foreign militarized formations, military equipment, militants and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine. Under the terms of the Minsk implementation package, OSCE observers are supposed to facilitate the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and monitor and verify the ceasefire regime and withdrawal of heavy weapons from day one.

And yet, six months after the signing of the Minsk memorandum and protocol and almost two weeks after the signing of the Minsk implementation package, OSCE observers have yet to receive full access from the separatists to all areas to monitor and verify the ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and foreign fighters, or security along the border.

Even today, after laying ruthless and deadly siege to the city of Debaltseve last week, approximately 30 to 40 kilometres beyond lines established by the September Minsk agreements, separatists have yet to allow the OSCE's special monitoring mission unrestricted and unfettered access to that city to observe the situation on the ground. So if we are serious about improving cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations, let us start with this: let us recognize that the work of the OSCE is critical to making the agreed ceasefire and any effort at de-escalation stick, as agreed by all 57 OSCE participating States, and let us take whatever action is necessary to ensure that all actors uphold their commitment to provide unfettered access to the OSCE in eastern Ukraine and that all parties respect the neutrality of its mission and its monitors.

Protecting their access is important because reports of the OSCE's special monitoring mission to Ukraine have been a key source for timely and impartial information on the situation in the Donbas area and

notably on incidents such as the downing of the MH-17 plane, the appearance of weapons, troops and support flowing from Russia into Ukraine, and the shelling of civilian targets in eastern Ukraine.

We commend the OSCE's efforts thus far and encourage the Chairperson-in-Office's continued dedication to monitoring the ceasefire and ensuring that all commitments made in Minsk are upheld, despite the very difficult conditions in which the mission works. He has the full backing of the United States, and, with the adoption of resolution 2202 (2014), the endorsement of the Security Council to implement the Minsk agreements.

The United States strongly endorses the Chairman-in-Office's focus on bolstering OSCE field missions and independent institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. The OSCE's field missions contribute to our collective respect for human rights and the institutionalization of the rule of law.

We also welcome the passage by the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2014 of two decisions on countering the phenomenon of foreign fighters and countering kidnapping for ransom. We support Mr. Dačić's efforts as Chairperson-in-Office to encourage implementation of those important decisions and to continue the work of OSCE field missions in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans on counter-terrorism issues, including countering violent extremism.

We welcome more OSCE awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts, which promote a multidimensional approach to countering violent extremism, and we encourage collaboration among stakeholders, particularly in the areas of youth, civil society, gender, community policing and human-rights-compliant approaches to addressing terrorism and violent extremism. We also thank the Chairman-in-Office for planning to host a regional expert-level summit in June to follow up on all of these efforts.

Lastly but importantly, in recent months we have seen what should be considered an alarming display of anti-Semitism in Europe, from the shootings at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, to the horrific anti-Semitic attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris, to the recent wide-scale desecration of a Jewish cemetery. Just as anti-Semitism in Europe is rising, so, too, must our will to combat and defeat it. For any organization that has a role in the maintenance of security and peace must also confront the kind of hate that undermines both, and anti-Semitism, as history has shown time and time again, is certainly that.

As such, it is all the more important that the OSCE has undertaken the important work that it has to address anti-Semitism and intolerance, including its declaration to enhance efforts to combat anti-Semitism, adopted at the Basel Ministerial as a follow-up to the commemoration in November of the tenth anniversary of the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism in Berlin.

And yet, despite all that has been unfolding across Europe at this 10-year anniversary meeting of the historic inaugural session, a third fewer countries showed up at the 2014 Conference. Of course, meetings and declarations will never alone quash hate, but they are important to focus our collective efforts, galvanize our collective will and force our collective action. The United States urges the Chairperson-in-Office to continue the OSCE's critical work on this issue, and we encourage OSCE participating States to help uphold the commitments enshrined in the declaration.

The United States, as an active member of the OSCE, remains fully committed to the important work of the organization. A strong OSCE is a good partner for the United Nations and a good partner in our cause of championing fairness, security, justice and peace.

Mrs. Adnin (Malaysia): I join other speakers in welcoming His Excellency Ivica Dačić, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, to the Council today. I wish to congratulate him on his assumption of the post of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2015, and we are grateful for his in-depth briefing, especially in outlining the priorities of the OSCE under Serbia's chairmanship.

As the largest regional security organization, consisting of 57 countries of Europe, Central Asia and North America, the OSCE plays a crucial role in contributing to peace, security and stability in Europe, as envisaged by Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Malaysia welcomes the reaffirmation by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE to continue close

cooperation with the United Nations in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter.

As mentioned by Mr. Dačić, this year marks the fortieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, which laid down principles to guide relations among participating States. Those principles, which include sovereign equality, refraining from the threat or use of force, the inviolability of frontiers, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in internal matters and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, remain as relevant today as they were 40 years ago. In upholding the aforementioned principles, which provide the basic tenets for the work of the OSCE, we welcome the efforts made by the Serbian chairmanship to focus on dialogue and compromise, the peaceful resolution of disputes, confidence-building, solidarity, responsibility and cooperation. We also believe that the motto of the Serbian chairship — "Rebuilding trust and confidence in order to create a positive agenda for the future" — is very timely, in view of the divisions and numerous challenges facing the region today.

Three weeks ago, the Munich Security Conference honoured the OSCE with an award for its outstanding contribution to peace, stability and security in Europe, and particularly for its efforts regarding the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, as well as its diplomatic attempts to end the crisis there. We congratulate it on a well-deserved award, especially in view of the dangerous situation on the ground in eastern Ukraine. Malaysia would also like to take this opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to the OSCE for facilitating the recovery and investigation efforts related to the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 in eastern Ukraine. Last year, with OSCE assistance, the Dutch-led recovery and investigation teams managed to get access to the site, despite the ongoing fighting, in order to recover the wreckage and the remains and belongings of the victims.

We reiterate our commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We fully support the role of the OSCE in Ukraine, now even more visible with the signing on 12 February of a package of measures for implementing the Minsk agreements that tasks the OSCE with monitoring and verifying compliance with the agreements. We are very concerned about the fact that the OSCE has been denied entry into some conflict areas in eastern Ukraine. We strongly urge all relevant parties to abide by the obligations laid down in the Minsk agreements and endorsed by the Council, and to cooperate fully with the OSCE in order to enable it to carry out its mandate.

We take note of the fact that the Western Balkans is a key priority for the Serbian chairmanship of the OSCE. We fully support the OSCE's continued presence in the Western Balkans, including its missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, in support of the post-conflict transition processes. By building institutions and promoting reconciliation, the OSCE has been vital to enabling the countries of the Western Balkans to make progress with their political, judicial, electoral, economic and social reforms.

Concerning various protracted conflicts, including those in Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus and Moldova, we hope that the Serbian chairship's focus on dialogue and mediation will provide a new impetus for resolving the conflicts that is consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and various United Nations resolutions, as well as the Helsinki Final Act.

We fully agree on the urgent need to combat terrorism, extremism and radicalization as one of the OSCE's key priorities. We also welcome the statement made by Mr. Dačić at the special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna on 15 January, in which he said that our societies should remain united in the face of attempts to create divisions on the basis of religion. At the same meeting, he also called on Governments to take the necessary measures not only to counter terrorism and provide their citizens with security, but also to foster tolerance and non-discrimination in their societies.

Malaysia hopes that the Serbian chairmanship of the OSCE will further intensify its efforts to combat all forms of racism, xenophobia and discrimination, including Islamophobia. Malaysia has long called for the voices of moderation to unite and prevail against those espousing hatred, violence and extremism. We reaffirm our strong and unequivocal condemnation of all violent acts, methods and practices of individuals or groups against innocent civilians, with the intent to create fear and terror for religious, political or ideological reasons. We strongly believe that terrorism must be addressed in a comprehensive manner and not necessarily through the use of force alone. Countering it effectively requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the underlying factors that breed terrorism and extremism. In that

regard, we stand ready to support the work of the OSCE in combating terrorism and extremism.

In conclusion, we wish Serbia success with its chairship for 2015. As an outsider, since Malaysia is not a member of the OSCE, we have observed that the organization has played a rather quiet, behind-the-scenes role in resolving conflicts and contributing to peace, stability and security in Europe. However, that approach has proved effective time and again, since it builds trust and confidence, whether by engaging with stakeholders, mediating between conflicting parties or building institutions in post-conflict societies. We greatly appreciate the OSCE's valuable contribution to the maintenance of peace and security and its close and complementary relations with the United Nations. We would like to assure the OSCE of our continued commitment to supporting its efforts under its Serbian chairship for 2015.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of China.

I would like to thank Mr. Dačić, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, for attending today's meeting. I listened carefully to his statement.

In recent years, the OSCE has taken active measures in conducting preventive diplomacy, enhancing security and mutual trust, mediating regional disputes and fighting terrorism. China would like to express its appreciation for that, and we encourage the OSCE to continue its efforts to settle disputes peacefully through good offices and mediation, in order to play a constructive role in the maintenance of peace, stability and security. The Security Council and regional organizations each enjoy unique advantages and strength when it comes to maintaining international peace and security. China supports the quest of the United Nations and the Council, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, to continue to deepen their cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in a way that complements one another's efforts, enabling them to work together to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter and the basic norms of international relations.

With regard to the issue of Ukraine, the Security Council recently adopted resolution 2202 (2015) unanimously, in a show of firm support on the part of the international community for the diplomatic efforts of the leaders of Russia, France, Germany and Ukraine, and for a political solution to the issue. In order to address that question, it is imperative that we adhere to the overarching premise of a political settlement, which is necessary if the legitimate rights and aspirations of the various ethnicities in various parts of Ukraine are to be fully accommodated. Attention could also be paid to resolving the reasonable concerns of the parties involved, so as to achieve a balance of interests. What is needed is a comprehensive, balanced and durable political settlement, whose achievement is in the fundamental interests of the parties concerned. China calls on them to act according to the provisions of resolution 2202 (2015), to fully implement the consensus arrived at among the four leaders, and to work to swiftly ease the situation in eastern Ukraine, in order to achieve that country's peace, stability and development.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make two brief comments.

First, some members of the Council have abused today's meeting, which is supposed to be devoted to the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Particularly unfortunate was the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom, which was devoted entirely to Ukraine. Our British colleague once again painted a very one-sided and distorted picture of what is happening. It is apparent that the United Kingdom does not have a complete understanding of the OSCE's role, and that is clearly a result of the fact that Britain is rapidly losing its international position, including on the European continent. The representative of the United States made a statement in a similar key, and that country's role throughout the Ukrainian crisis has been exclusively destructive. All we can do now is hope that the United States will not try to put a wrench in the works of the Normandy process.

Secondly, these days such comments are often used to achieve a desired political and psychological effect. The conflict in Ukraine is the most complex crisis Europe has seen since the end of the Cold War. It is clear that the crisis needs to be assessed in a calculated way. Let us recall that, even after the end of the Cold

War, war broke out in the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic and NATO bombed Serbia. In many cases, the causes for such crises are the very forces that provoked the crisis in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the geopolitical ambitions of a number of forces precluded the flowering of a harmonious political order on the European continent following the end of the Cold War. We need to draw lessons from that. The OSCE's mission is to play a very important role in the process of such rethinking.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the United Kingdom has asked to speak for a second time.

Mr. Meek (United Kingdom): In response to the point made by our Russian colleague, the focus on Ukraine reflected the serious nature of the situation on the ground there, precipitated by Russia's actions and support for the separatists involved in the conflict. Our calls throughout have been clear. We have called on all sides to observe the ceasefire and implement in full the arrangement set out in the Minsk agreements of September last year and 12 February just past. Where we see flagrant and one-sided breaches of those arrangments, we are duty-bound to draw them to the attention of our colleagues on the Council at briefings such as these.

As my Permanent Representative said, only 40 minutes after the ceasefire came into effect separatists backed by Russia launched a final, all-out assault to secure the town of Debaltseve, something they had clearly been aiming for in the days just before the ceasefire came into effect.

The provisions that will facilitate a resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine are clearly laid out in the Minsk agreements. We call again on all parties, including Russia, to play their part in implementing those agreements fully, verifiably and transparently, and in supporting efforts to de-escalate tensions and bring the violence to an end.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to Mr. Dačić to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Dačić (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to thank all Security Council member States for the support they have expressed to our chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

I would also like to reiterate our wish to cooperate as closely as possible with the United Nations, and therefore value this very beneficial and important meeting. I express my full willingness and readiness, along with those of our Secretary General, Mr. Zannier, and my Special Representatives in various areas, in particular my Special Representative in Ukraine, to participate in the work of the United Nations and to brief the Council on the situation on the ground. The OSCE is the only organization present in Ukraine. That is why the support of the United Nations is of crucial importance to OSCE activities and why I welcome the holding of this meeting.

Without mentioning all of the areas of OSCE engagement, I would like to draw the Council's attention to several topics on our agenda, including the campaigns against anti-Semitism and human trafficking, and water management. I will not mention the various frozen or protracted conflicts except to say that we will use existing means to resolve such situations as those in Nagorno Karabakh, Moldova and Georgia.

I would also like to reiterate that I, as Chairperson-in-Office, together with my team, intend to visit all areas that have an OSCE presence. I have already visited the OSCE missions in the the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and, strange as it may seem, Serbia as well. Against that backdrop, I wish to familiarize myself with all existing issues. I intend to visit the OSCE missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, of course Ukraine, and the five central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

I recall that Switzerland assumed the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2014; before Switzerland, Ukraine held the chairmanship. The 2013 Ministerial Council was held in Kyiv only two or three months before the eruption of the crisis in Ukraine, and there was no notion or early warning that the crisis would happen. That is a demonstration of how complex the situation is and how difficult it is to plan any activity in an organization such as the OSCE.

We have adopted an budget enabling us to carry out all our activities on the ground. I am grateful for the work of the OSCE troika — Germany, Switzerland and ourselves — and the Normandy group, which includes Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France. The Normandy format meeting took place this morning in Paris, and any participation, whether via video-teleconference,

conference call or personal presence involving either Ms. Tagliavini or Mr. Apakan, is crucial to enabling us to implement the Minsk agreements. I welcome these agreements and hope that some progress will be made on the ground.

I discussed the topic yesterday with my counterparts from Russia and Ukraine, Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Klimkin. The mandate of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine will come to an end in late March. We have already started to reflect on a new mission, and two ministers have agreed that the current Mission could be extended. The mandate is currently 6 months; we propose that it be extended to 12 months. We also discussed whether there are a sufficient number of observers, and touched on the topic of equipment, of which there was some mention in accordance with the agreement, but which we do not possess. Those include satellite images, drones and armed vehicles. We also broached topics such as the budget, and touched on the issue mentioned by the Lithuanian representative, namely, the mandate of the mission. It remains to be seen whether the scope of the mandate will be changed or remain the same. We will do that in accordance with the agreements under the Normandy format.

I would just like to remind the Council of the scope of responsibility of the Special Monitoring Mission. It is not only to verify the ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons or the exchange of hostages and prisoners; it will also have to address the law on amnesty and pardons, the reconstruction of social and economic ties, and issues related to gas and electricity, pensions, salaries and trafficking, as well as political issues that were preconditions to achieving full normalization. The agreement envisaged that the Ukrainian authorities would take control of the border the first day after local elections were held in Donetsk and Luhansk, based on agreements that remain to be concluded through mediation under the auspices of the Trilateral Contact Group. The completion of the dialogue, the agreements reached therein, the drafting of the constitution and the role of the OSCE are all highly significant on the ground. That is why various task forces must be established to take charge of the different issues.

I believe that the mission requires full support. There are two missions on the ground. The first is the Special Monitoring Mission, headed by Mr. Apakan; the second is the Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk, headed by the French diplomat, Mr. Picard. The Swiss Ambassador, Ms. Heidi Tagliavini, is my Personal Representative to the Trilateral Contact Group. It is very important for us to enjoy the support of the United Nations and the Security Council to provide the authority to those missions and thereby enable them to conduct their work in an impartial and fair manner.

We have not made significant progress regarding the ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons, but our missions need to verify that. We have been told that the parties have started to implement the ceasefire in Donetsk and Luhansk and to withdraw weapons. That is why I called on the parties to provide access to our monitors so they can verify the actions on the ground to determine the truth of the matter. I raise this issue only to illustrate the difficulty of carrying out a mission that is neither military nor combat in nature, but civilian.

At the same time, not all members of the Security Council or other United Nations States Members are aware of the enormous size of the territory of Ukraine. It is the second largest country in Europe. The contact line is 480 kilometers long. The part of the border between Ukraine and Russia that is not under the control of the Ukrainian forces is more than 400 kilometers long. Our mission of 350 personnel needs to be functional and able to conduct its activities. If the political will exists to sign the agreement and adopt the implementation plan, we will make every effort to fully implement the agreement.

I would like to again thank the Council for its assistance in that regard. The OSCE considers the support of the United Nations on the ground to be of the highest importance to ensuring its ability to perform its functions and to de-escalate the crisis in Ukraine, although I do not wish to downplay other ongoing problems. I, my Secretary General and my Special Representatives are ready to respond to the Council's call to participate in debates such as this or on any of topic of great importance to our organization.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.